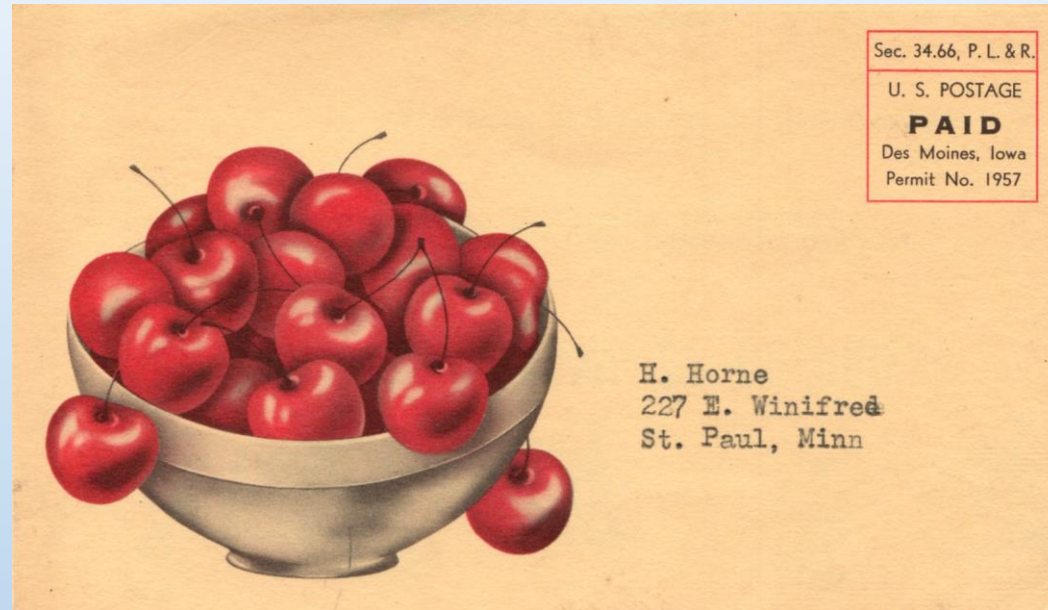


Life is Just a _____



[Bowl of Cherries]

Idioms Illustrated and Explained – Part II Food (14 phrases)

by Tom Fortunato

idiom (n.)- an expression whose meaning can not be derived from its elements

How many times over the course of a day do you hear these? They're so common in our vernacular that we hardly take the time to recognize them with thousands in the English language alone. A few are presented here using a wide variety of material found mostly in dealer junk boxes. Don't expect to find philatelic rarities, but you will see some interesting items.

Most important is your participation! This presentation is in "fill in the blank" game format. You'll see a partial phrase at the top of each page related to the item shown along with a clue to the idiom's meaning. Just complete the phrase and keep track of your number right and wrong.

PowerPoint users have 5 seconds before a 15 second timeclock counts down then "dings," by which time an answer must be given. PDF users play on the honor system! Clicking the next page reveals the answer along with details of the origins and meaning of the idiom. Ten references were used researching these. Not all agreed, but the majority plausible response appears here.

This is 1 of 7 thematic related parts (# phrases in each). Enjoy them all!

I – Animals (24) **II – Food (14)** III – Man (18) IV - Sports & Games (9)

V – Nature (25) VI – Music (8) VII - Pot Luck (39)

II- Food

lay ____

- *to fail*



*British 1936 test stamp
known as a "poached egg."*



II- Food

lay an egg

- *to fail*



*British 1936 test stamp
known as a “poached egg.”*

British sports term (lay a duck's egg) from 1863 referring to a cricket player who failed to score. Became “Americanized” with the phrase “goose egg.”



II- Food _____ never boils

- *patience prevails*



II- Food

a watched pot never boils

- *patience prevails*



Believed to originate from the soup kitchens of the 1800's.

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II- Food _____ your wild oats

- *act foolishly when young*



II- Food sow your wild oats

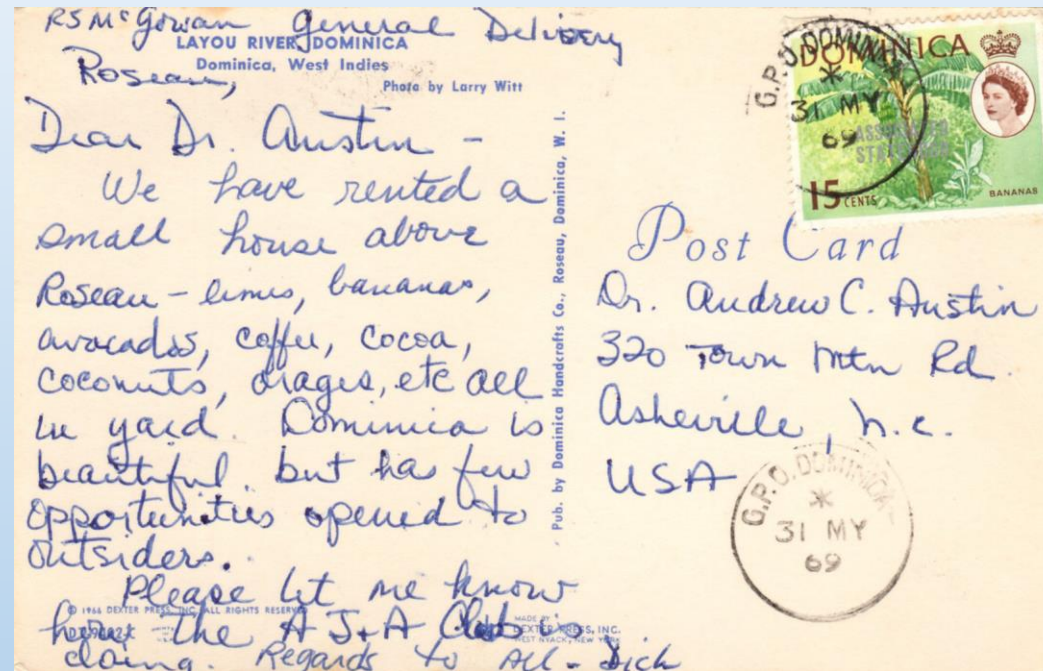
- *act foolishly when young*

“Wild oat” is actually the tall grass *avena fatua*. Cultivating it would be a waste of time. First seen in the 1576 Lemnies’ *Touchstone of Complexions*, loosely translated from Latin as, “that willful and unruly age, which lacks ripeness and discretion, not having sown wild oats.”



II- Food top

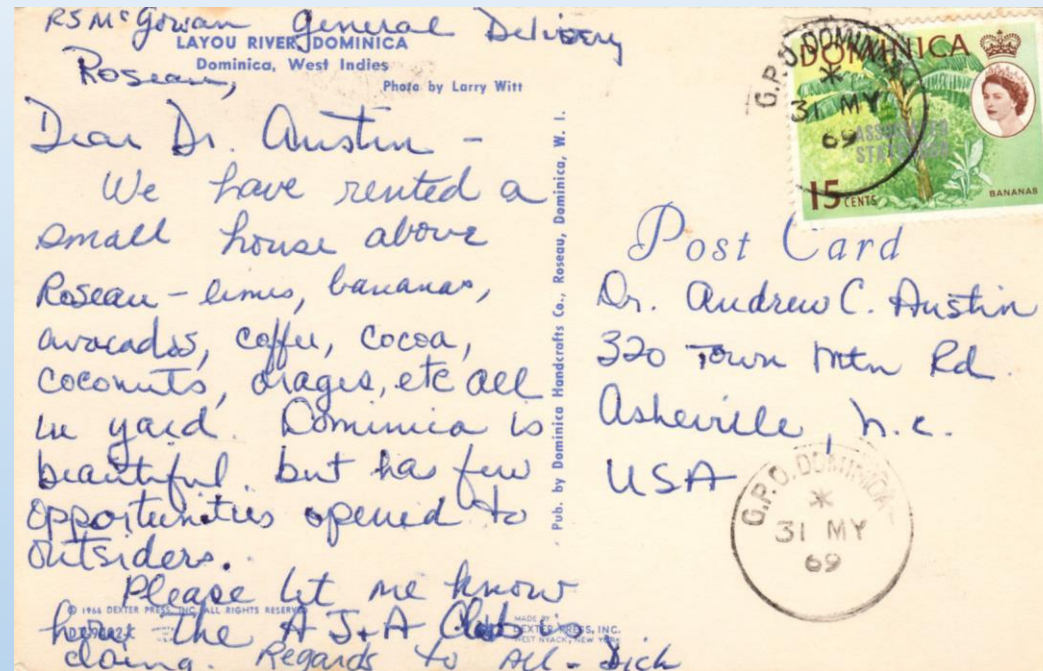
- *the boss*



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II- Food top banana

- *the boss*



Believed to originate from an early vaudeville comedy routine about bananas.

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II- Food _____ of my eye

- *cherished person or item*



II- Food **apple** of my eye

- *cherished person or item*



From the Bible: Deuteronomy XXIII, 10; and also Zechariah II, 8 (1535 Coverdale version). The eye's pupil was known as the “apple” in medieval England.

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II- Food lock, stock _____

- *all, the entirety*



II- Food lock, stock and barrel

- *all, the entirety*



Referring to parts of a gun: the lock (firing mechanism), stock (handle), and barrel (shaft). Mentioned in J.G. Lockhart's biography of Sir Walter Scott of 1817.

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II- Food _____ before they hatch

- *plans often run afoul*



II- Food don't count your chickens before they hatch

- *plans often run afoul*

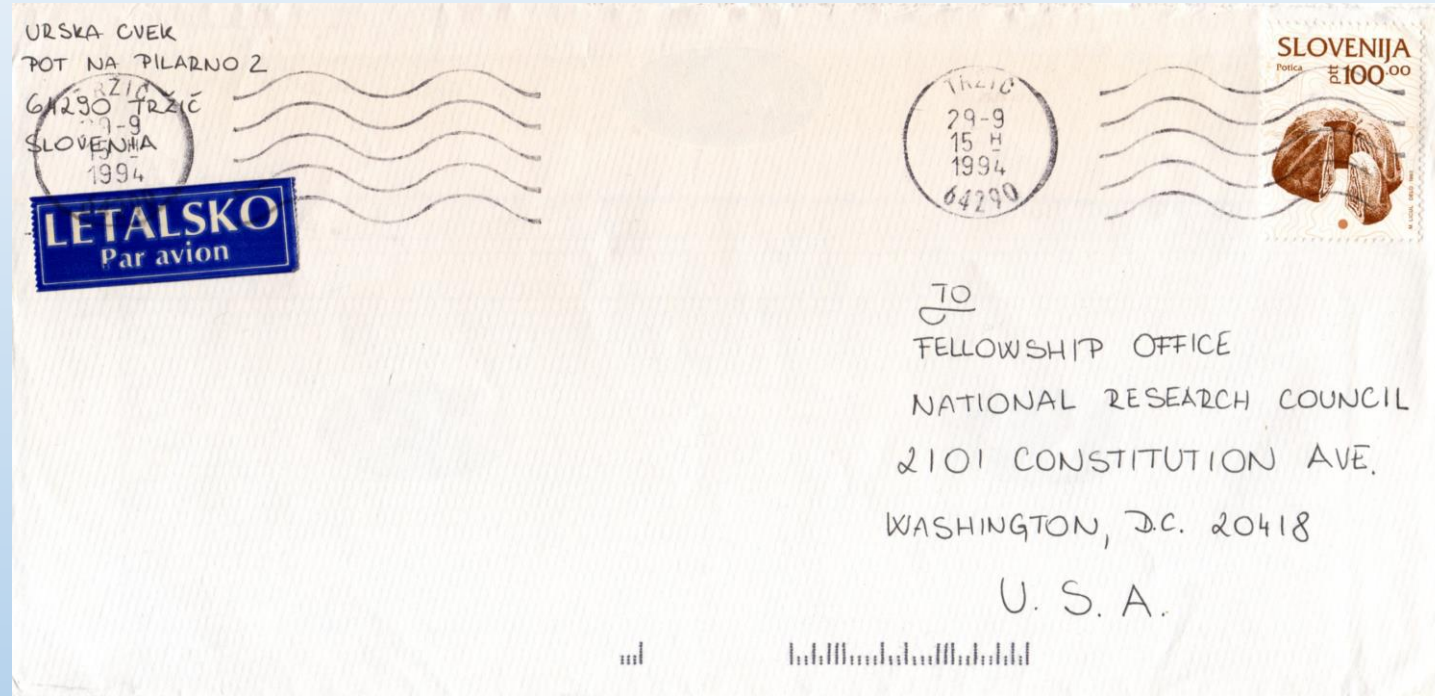


From one of Aesop's Fables. It tells of a woman walking to the market to sell her eggs who was figuring her profit just before tripping and breaking all of them.

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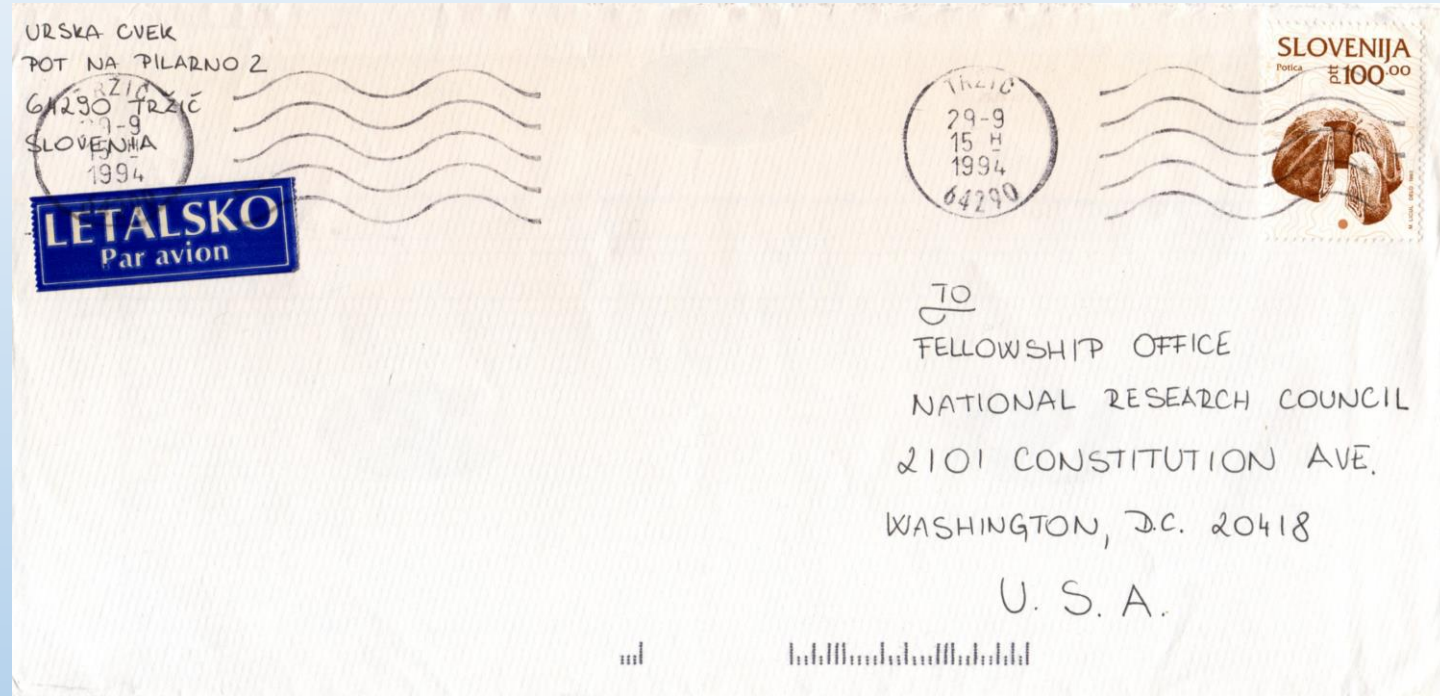
II- Food piece of _____

- *easy, without trouble*



II- Food piece of cake

- *easy, without trouble*



From Ogden Nash's *Primrose Path* of 1936, "Her picture's in the paper now, and her life's a piece of cake."

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II- Food _____ someone up

- *flatter, excessively praise*



II- Food **butter** someone up

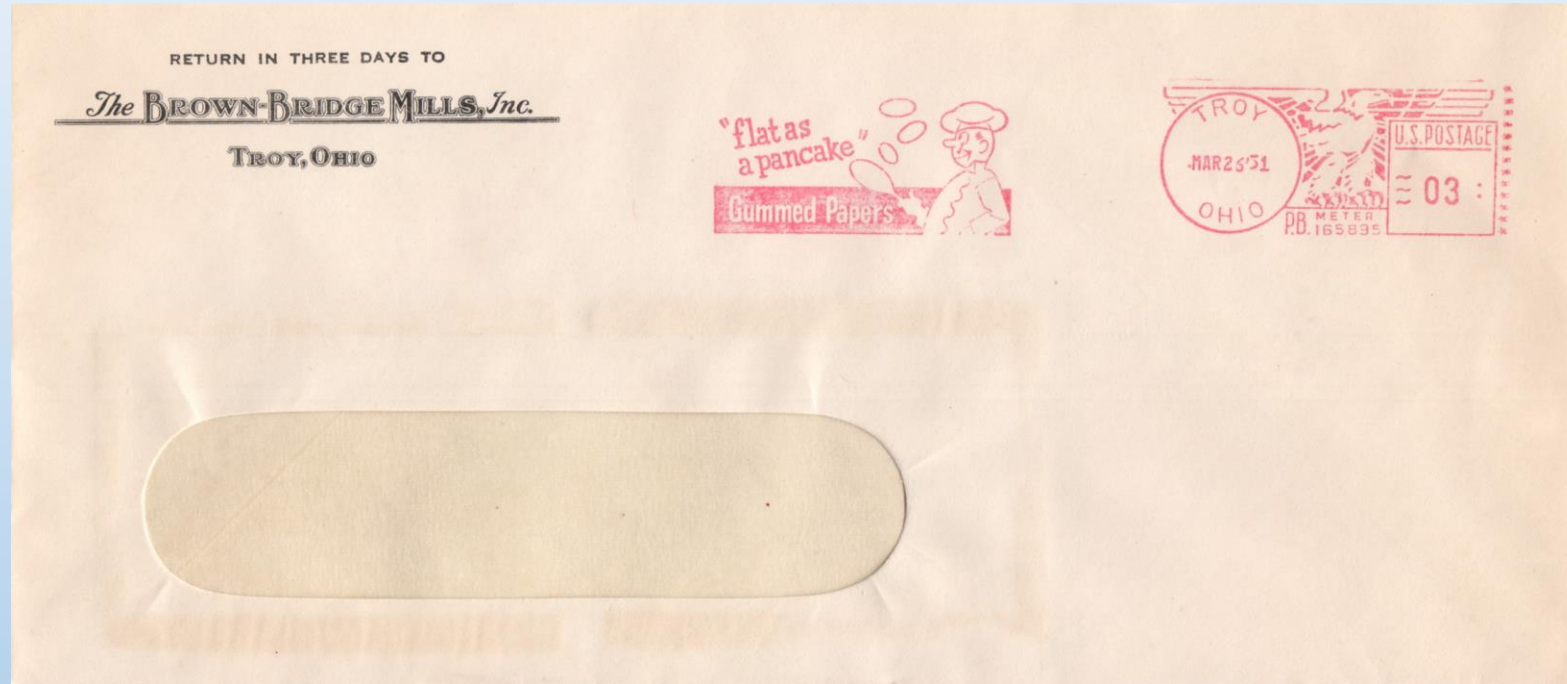
- *flatter, excessively praise*



Noted in *Saturday Review* of 1884, the Chief Justice of England touring America “battered the natives.”

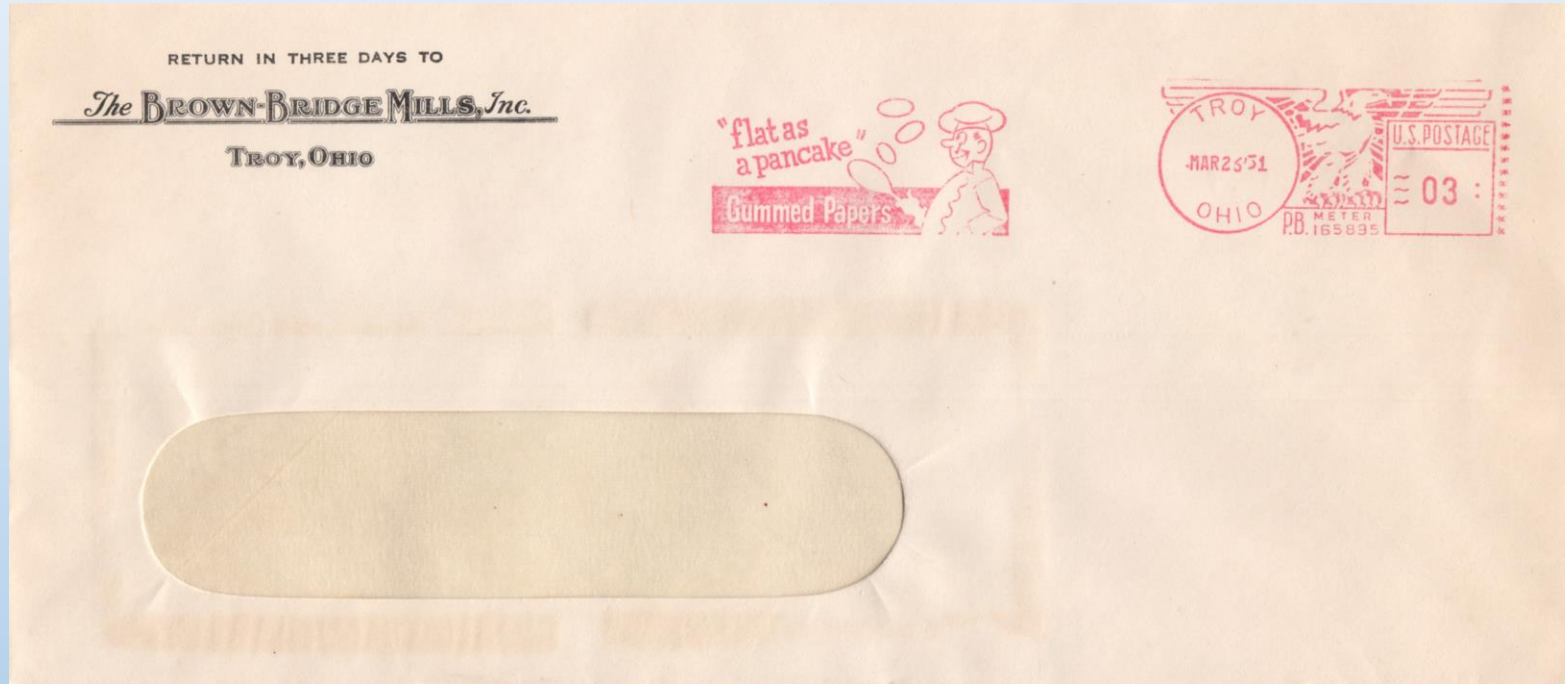
II- Food

- *absolutely flat*



II- Food flat as a pancake

- *absolutely flat*



First in print in 1611 in a play by Thomas Middleton, *The Roaring Girl*,
"Beat all your feathers down as flat as a pancake."

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II- Food _____ with gas

- *skillful, enthusiastic*



II- Food cooking with gas

- *skillful, enthusiastic*

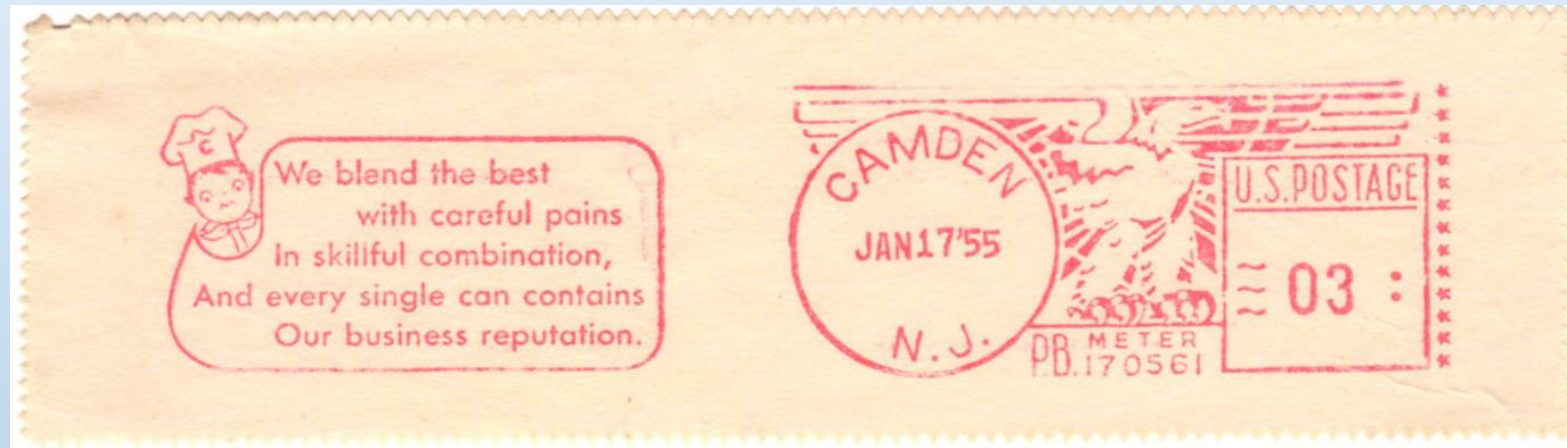


African-American expression denoting effortlessness.

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II- Food _____ to nuts

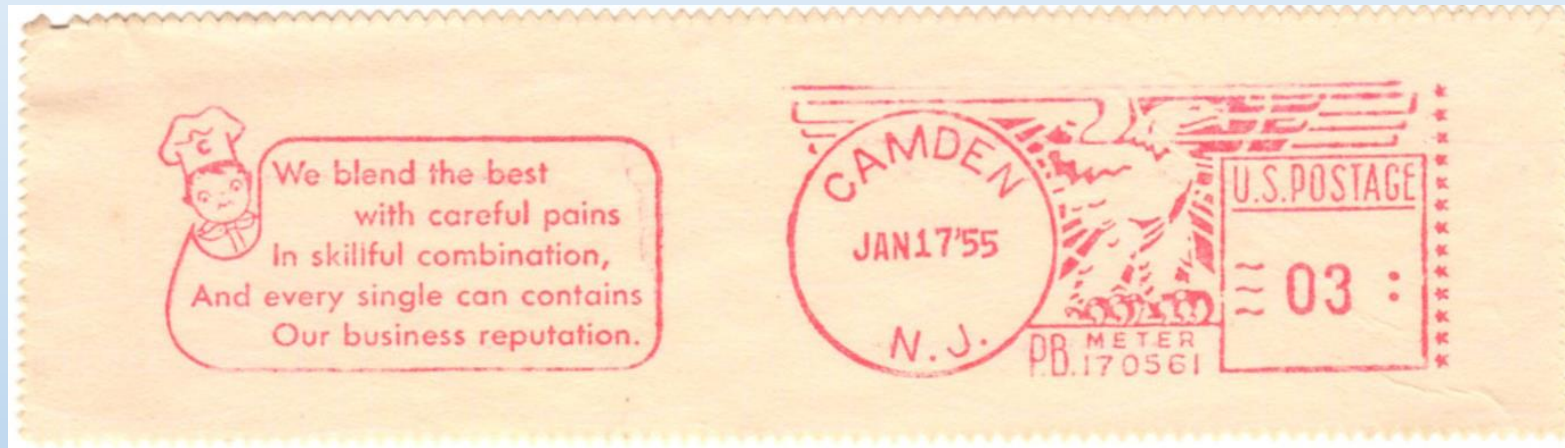
- *all-inclusive, complete*



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II- Food from soup to nuts

- *all-inclusive, complete*



20th century American phrase, stemming from the British, “from eggs to apples.” and later, “from pottage to cheese.” All expressed completeness.

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II- Food not your _____

- *not liked, uninteresting*



II- Food not your cup of tea

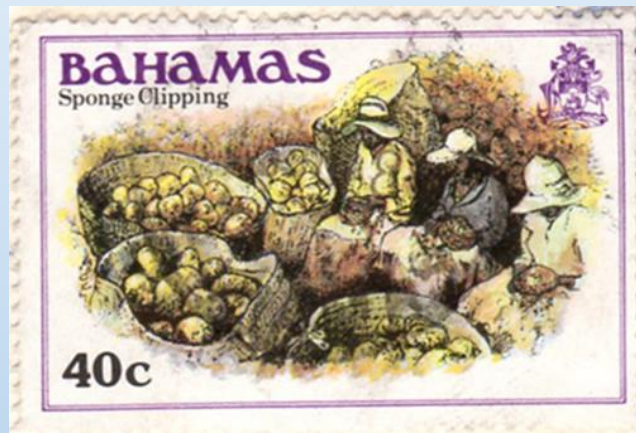
- *not liked, uninteresting*



Late 1800's British expression referring to the wide variety of teas available at the time.

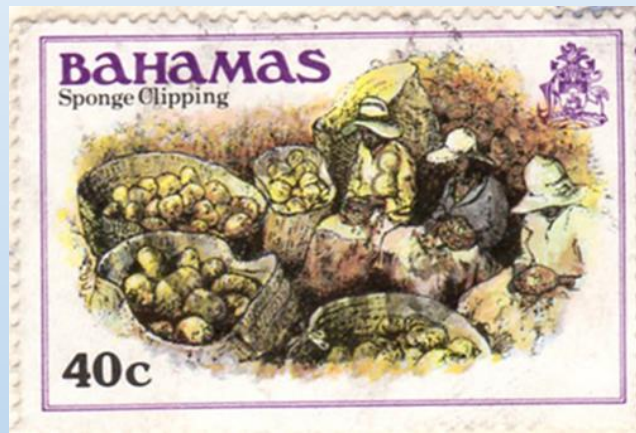
II- Food don't put all your _____

- *don't rely on just one option*



II- Food don't put all your eggs in one basket

- *don't rely on just one option*



From early writings of Giovanni Torriano in 1666, "To put all one's eggs in one paniard, viz. to hazard all in one bottom."

This is the end of Part II- Food.

If you liked this presentation,
try one of the other parts!

See them all and the original
exhibit online at:

<http://www.rpastamps.org/presentations>